

The One Where Ross is GONE

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Summary: Repost, no new text. Ross falls down the stairs, and is later reported as deceased by the hospital.

The One Where Ross is GONE

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**\*\*Warnings\*\***: Second attempt at FRIENDS fan fiction, hope there will be no hate mail due to any unintended mistakes

**\*\*Summary\*\***: Ross ends up in hospital after a fight with Rachel, and is later reported to Chandler as accidentally deceased. In addition, Monica has something hard to deal with in her life, and finds it impossible to get Chandler's attention to tell him.

**\*\*Title\*\***: The One Where Ross is G - O - N - E

\* \* \*

><p>Chandler Bing was sitting on the couch in the Central Perk coffee shop, reading a newspaper, when his friends Ross Geller and Joey Tribbianni came in and sat down next to him.<p>

"Hey dude, how you doin'?" said Joey in his broad Italian accent.

"Oh, just fine!" said Chandler, very sarcastically.

"Uh-oh, I recognise that voice," said Joey. "Either he's got

problems, or he's been invited as a guest performer on `Viva Las GayGas'!"

"Joey!" said Ross. He turned to face Chandler and said, "Hey buddy, what's wrong?"

Chandler looked depressed. "A lot of things. Like, I think your sister's not speaking to me, 'cause she's mad about something \_"

Joey interrupted him, "How come? What'd you do this time?"

Chandler glared at him. "This time!" he said.

Joey shrugged. "Hey, hey, I just assumed. Anyway, if Monica's mad at you, doesn't matter - you should apologise even if you didn't do anythin'." Ross stared at him. "Hey, I should know, I read it on one of Chandler's web sites!"

Ross looked at him strangely. "Is this the same place where you learned geometry is a false theory?"

Chandler glared at both of them now. "Hey, yo, Tom Sawyer? Huck Finn? We were discussing MY problems here?"

Joey and Ross shrugged. "Yeah, sure, man...", "Go ahead..."

Chandler's temper subsided. "And apart from that, Rachel is going to want to beat the hell out of me!"

Joey looked puzzled. "What for?"

Chandler gestured discreetly towards the main counter. "Look over there," he said. Their friend Rachel Green and a tall, dark-haired man were sitting, chatting and laughing on a pair of stools.

Ross looked confused. "What's the problem? She looks happy."

Chandler now looked frustrated. "She's over there with Eric from work. I mean, I introduced them to each other, sort of set them up! Rachel asked him to meet her here!"

Joey asked, "So?"

Chandler said agitatedly, "I didn't know he was gay at the time!"

Joey and Ross both recoiled. They both said at the same time, "Oh boy!"

\* \* \*

><p>Phoebe Bouffay was just finishing the latest rendition of her song `Smelly Cat' on-stage at the Central Perk, when Rachel and Eric made their way to the door and said their good-byes. "Thank you everyone!" she said, as she got up. She then looked as Rachel stood outside the coffee shop with a happy smile on her face, and watched him go.<p>

Phoebe grabbed her guitar and got off the stage, joining her three friends Joey, Ross and Chandler. "Hey you guys!" she said excitedly. "I think Rachel is really smitten with her date!"

Chandler groaned. "No, please..."

Phoebe looked confused. "What's wrong? They look so cute together!"

Joey agreed with a grin on his face. "Yeah, Chandler, way to go!"

Chandler glared at him. "I'm warning you, Joe -"

Ross cut him off. "Hey, knock it off. We have to decide, who's going to tell her?"

Phoebe asked, "Tell her what?"

Joey tried to explain. "Pheebs, this can't work out 'cause â€" 'cause they're on opposite teams, you know what I mean?"

Phoebe looked insulted. "Joey, what difference does it make if he's a Republican or a Democrat?"

Ross ran his fingers through his hair in exasperation and made a grinding noise with his teeth. "He's gay, Phoebe!" he said slowly.

Phoebe's eyes went wide. "Oh. OH!"

Chandler said, "I swear, a lightbulb just appeared in front of me!"

Joey replied, "Come on man! Let's choose who does this already. I think you should be the one to tell her."

Chandler looked scared. "Me?"

Joey shrugged. "You got 'em into this, didn't you?"

Phoebe said, "Wait a minute. It shouldn't be him."

Chandler looked at her in gratitude. "Thanks Pheebs."

Phoebe continued, "He'd just get Rachel to decide to switch teams."

Chandler muttered in anger, "Last time I clap for 'Smelly Cat' -"

Phoebe ignored him. "You know, it should be someone who has experience with regards to rejection. Someone who's been in this sort of situation before. Someone Rachel will trust and know has her best interests at heart."

There was a moment of silence. Then Phoebe, Joey and Chandler turned their heads and stared at Ross.

"Oh, no!" Ross shook his head violently. "Don't look at ME! No way am I going to get involved in something like this! Besides, that business with Mark wasn't all that long ago!"

Phoebe pleaded with him. "Come on, Ross! You know I'm right!"

Joey nodded. "She has a point, dude."

Chandler looked desperate. "I'm begging you man! Look, don't do it for me, do it for her! You know her better than any of us. It won't be as hard on her coming from you!"

Ross wilted under the barrage of pleas. "Okay! Okay! Just - just stop already will you, I'll do it!"

Phoebe looked pleased, with a big smile on her face. "Oh, yay! You're doing the right thing Ross. Just make sure -"

Ross looked puzzled. "What?"

Phoebe said apologetically, "Well, if I'm wrong, just make sure you leave the door unlocked, 'cause otherwise Rachel really will kick your ass!"

Ross had the exasperated look back on his face. "Thanks a lot for telling me that Pheebs!"

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><p>Later on in Rachel and Monica's apartment, Monica Geller came out of the bathroom and sat down on the couch. Then she put her face in her hands, as if in pain.<p>

Rachel came out of her room, and saw her there. "Mon sweetie, what's wrong?"

Monica straightened up, and looked at her guiltily. "Nothing, Rach, I'm fine."

Rachel looked at her sceptically. "Honey, this is me you're talking to. Your best friend? You look like I would if somebody told me Bloomingdales had just burned down!"

Monica smiled briefly. "No, really, I just have to talk to Chandler. About - things."

Rachel looked intrigued. "What things?"

Monica shrugged. "About the future, I guess. Just - stuff I need to sort out."

Rachel shrugged as well. "Okay. So, are you going to work now?"

Monica shook her head. "No, I called in sick. Besides, they'll miss me like a hole in the head!"

Rachel laughed. "Feeling better?"

Monica smiled again. "Yeah. So tell me, how was your date with

Eric?"

Rachel started beaming with happiness. "Oh, it was fantastic! He's smart, funny, good-looking, and a real gentleman! He even likes the place where I work. You know, this might be a bit premature, but I - I think -"

Monica looked at her. "What?"

Rachel said hurriedly, "I think he might be the one!"

Monica was stunned. "Really? After just one date?"

Rachel nodded. "I really have this feeling, you know? He's different from other men! I have to hand it to Chandler, he knows how to introduce the right sort of guys to me!"

Just then the door opened, and Ross walked in. "Hey," he said.

Monica got up and hugged him. "Hi Ross. I'm glad you're here."

Ross looked surprised. "You okay?"

Monica nodded. "Yeah, I just have some things to sort out. Listen you guys," she spoke to both of them, "I've got to get some more rest, I'll be in my room okay?"

Rachel and Ross nodded. "Sure,", "Go ahead Mon," and she walked out of the room, shutting the door behind her.

Ross looked around, suddenly very nervous. "Uh, so Rach, how've you been?"

Rachel smiled at him. "I'm fine. Life is wonderful, Ross!"

Ross gulped. "Really? That's, uh, great. Hey, the guys were just talking about that new man you're seeing, what's his name?"

Rachel said, "Eric? Yeah, I know, he's fantastic!"

Ross said even more nervously, "Is that so?"

Rachel, not noticing, bubbled happily, "Yeah he's, like, perfect! I've never met anyone like him. You know, I think this could be something special, Ross."

He muttered to himself, "That's for sure!"

She asked, "What?"

Ross said quickly, "Never mind. Look, uh, Rachel, there's something I have to tell you, it's about Eric -" he stopped, unable to go on.

Rachel looked at him. "What?"

Ross blurted out, "Rach, he's gay!"

Rachel just stared. Then she started laughing. "Ha, that's a good one

Ross!"

Ross just stared at her, with an agonized expression on his face.  
"Rachel -"

She stopped laughing. "You're not serious!"

Ross didn't say anything. Rachel started walking around, talking partly to herself and partly to Ross. "No, no this can't be happening! I mean, Chandler would never have..."

Ross interrupted her. "Rachel, Chandler didn't know. Uh, I mean, he found out later, after he - well, you know -"

Rachel sat down and buried her face in her hands briefly. "I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!" she yelled.

Ross tried to comfort her. "Hey, it's all right, you'll meet someone else -"

Rachel interrupted him angrily. "Yeah, right!"

Ross ignored her outburst, sat down next to her and took her hand. "I mean it. Look, you're smart, you're beautiful, it's just a matter of time before -"

Rachel screamed, "TIME?" She made an effort to settle down. "Time? Come on Ross, let's look at my track record, shall we? Just look at the fiascos I've had in my love life! First there was Barry, then Paulo, then there was Joshua, then Danny, and now Eric!"

Ross tried to say, "Well -"

Rachel went on, "And let's not forget YOU!"

Ross said hesitantly, "You know, I - I like to think I'm not exactly one of them, Rach. I mean, at least we're still close friends."

Rachel looked at her hand clasped in his. She sighed, and leaned back. "Yeah, yeah you're right. You - you've been there for me, Ross. Even when I didn't want you to. Oh, wait till I get my hands on that Chandler -!"

Ross took her other hand, and she came forward. "Uh, Rach, please, he really didn't mean any harm. Yeah, he made a honest mistake, but could you - you know? Please? As a favour to me?"

Rachel sighed again. "Oh, what the hell. What's the point anyway? Wait a minute," she said suspiciously. "He asked you to tell me about this, didn't he?"

Ross squirmed. "Yeah," he said eventually.

Rachel grimaced. "Huh. I should have known."

Ross said urgently, "Come on Rach, cheer up, please! I'm here for you."

Rachel looked at him. "Yeah, you are, aren't you?"

The two of them continued to look at each other in silence. Rachel leaned forward, and kissed Ross gently on the lips. Then she pulled away from him, staring at Ross with a look of surprised consternation on her face. Ross stared back at her in silence, an equally surprised expression on his features. Suddenly Rachel plunged her lips onto his, with great fierceness and passion, wrapping her arms around him and dragging him down on top of her on the couch.

All of a sudden Ross pulled away from her, getting up and saying, "No, no this isn't right, I can't do this -"

Rachel got up as well, with a hurt expression on her face. "What's wrong?" she said.

Ross stammered, "Rachel, don't take this the wrong way, please, but this doesn't feel right -"

Rachel started to look angry. "What?" she said icily.

Ross tried to explain. "Rachel, you're very upset right now over Eric and all - this is - I mean, I don't want to take advantage of you -"

Rachel interrupted him with an angry, "WHAT?"

Ross started to back away, and gestured nervously. "Rachel please, calm down, this isn't good for your blood pressure you know -"

Rachel made an angry noise, grabbed an ashtray and threw it straight at his head. At the last moment Ross ducked, and a loud BANG was heard as the missile hit the door. Ross looked at her in amazement and said, "Why did you -?"

Rachel bellowed, "IT FELT RIGHT!"

Ross by now was close to the door. "Look - I'll talk to you later, when you've calmed down a bit -"

Rachel's eyes were blazing. "You know what Ross? DROP DEAD!"

Ross turned and looked at her, looking hurt. "You - you don't mean that -"

Rachel shouted, "YOU WANNA BET?"

Ross decided to leave. "See you later, Rachel."

Rachel screamed as he closed the door, "NOT IF I SEE YOU FIRST!" Then she sat down on the couch, and started to cry her eyes out.

Monica poked her head out of the bedroom door and said, "Well, if that doesn't get you two back together again, I don't know what will!"

\* \* \*

><p>As Ross stepped out of the apartment, he saw Phoebe, Joey and Chandler quickly backing away as if they'd been listening at the

door. He said glumly, "You heard, huh?"<p>

Chandler said, "Pal, the entire apartment building must have heard!"

Joey said, "You know, I bet most of the tenants would pay good money to hear you two, if you could arrange to do this more often  
\_"

Phoebe said, "Hey!"

Joey looked hurt, and said, "It was just a suggestion!"

Chandler said to Ross gratefully, "Thanks for doing that for me, buddy. I'd have been lucky to come out of there in a body bag!"

Ross said, "No - look, that - that was partly my fault anyway. I - I've got to get going, okay? You guys, Ben's expecting me. I - I'll see you later." He turned and strode off towards the stairs.

As he reached the foot of the stairwell, Phoebe saw a wet spot. She called out, "Ross, look out for -"

Ross turned and interrupted, saying "What?", just as his foot slipped and he fell down the stairs with a prolonged yell.  
"Ahhhhhhhhh!"

Phoebe, Chandler and Joey ran over to the stairs. Joey called out, "Watch out for the last step, you'll get an ass full of splinters!"

Chandler looked at him with equal parts amazement and scorn. "You definitely fell down one of these as a child, didn't you?" he asked.

\* \* \*

><p>The hospital was crowded, and the walls were painted a sickly off-white colour of the kind that was designed to keep the patients docile and subdued. Ross sat up in one of the few private rooms, his left forearm in plaster and held in a brace above the bed, sipping some orange juice with a bored expression on his face. All of a sudden Monica, Chandler, Joey and Phoebe came into the room.<p>

Phoebe said "Hi Ross."

"Are you doing okay?" said Monica.

"You had us worried," put in Chandler.

"Yeah, but hey has anybody checked out the nurses in this place?" said Joey excitedly. "Next time I've got to go down those stairs with you, buddy!"

"No doubt about it," said Chandler, "any second now, we're going to hear him say something like ET PHONE HOME!" he said the last four words in an alien-like accent.

Ross said, "Hey, thanks for coming, you guys. Mom and Dad were here



earlier, but I'm really glad you showed up." He stopped, and looked around. "Where's Rachel?"

The four guests looked at each other. Monica said, "Uh, Ross, she's sorry she couldn't make it, but there was an emergency, someone from work called -"

"Yeah!" interrupted Joey. "Someone wanted to buy a whole shipment of see-through bikinis!"

"Yeah, right," said Ross morosely, knowing the truth.

"Look, Ross, she's still upset, okay?" said Monica. "She'll calm down, but it'd probably be better if you two didn't start fighting in here!"

Phoebe agreed. "It would really upset all the sick people's karma with so many bad vibes!"

Chandler put in, "Besides, I don't think you could duck very well from that position!"

Ross said wearily, "Could we please talk about something else?"

Joey said, "So, when are they lettin' you out of here dude?"

Ross's expression brightened. "Tomorrow, hopefully. I mean it's not bad here and all, but I just want to go home. But they insisted on keeping me under observation for 24 hours, so -" he shrugged.

Just then a doctor entered the room, looking like a dark-haired version of Gwynneth Paltrow in blue medical operating pajamas and a stethoscope. "And how is the patient feeling today?" she said to Ross, moving to check his chart.

Ross shrugged. "Okay, I guess."

Joey was standing there with his mouth hanging open. "I think I'm in love," he said softly to the others.

Phoebe nudged him in the ribs with her elbow. "Don't drool on the floor, this is a place for sick people!"

The doctor looked at the visitors and said, "I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to leave us while I examine my patient."

"Yeah, okay," said Phoebe.

"Ross, we'll see you tomorrow, all right?" said Monica.

"Yeah, I'll call the hospital, come and pick you up when they release you," promised Chandler.

The group started to move out, but Joey didn't budge. Monica and Phoebe looked at each other briefly at the door, as Chandler had already vanished into the hall. Looking annoyed, they went back and put one arm through each of Joey's, and proceeded to pull him along with them out of the room, heels dragging. Joey paid no attention - he was actually still staring at the doctor open-mouthed.

When they were alone, the doctor took Ross's pulse at the wrist. "Have you been feeling any headaches, nausea, muscle spasms or \_"

"No, no and no," interrupted Ross. "Look, doctor -"

"Taylor," she said mildly. "Doctor Sarah Taylor, at your service."

"Doctor Taylor," Ross said firmly. "I feel fine, apart from the arm. I just want to know, how long will it be before I'm completely all right again?"

She shrugged. "Mr. Geller, the bone was fractured in three places. Do you realise just how lucky you were? Your accident could easily have been fatal. As it is, it'll be at least six to eight weeks before the arm is fully healed."

"Six weeks?" said Ross in disbelief.

"Or more," she said levelly. "It'll be at least two weeks before you can lose the plaster cast. No heavy lifting for you for a while, I'm afraid. I'll make sure your employer knows your limitations."

"Six weeks," said Ross in misery.

"It beats being six feet under," said Doctor Taylor again in that mild tone. "Now please roll over onto your side, I need to examine your back."

Ross complied, without saying anything. Doctor Taylor came up and examined him, frowning to herself. "Hmm."

"What is it?" asked Ross.

"There are multiple abrasions and contusions, but no permanent damage, luckily," said Doctor Taylor. "You really were fortunate. You mind telling me how exactly all this came about?"

"Well, uh, it's a long story," said Ross hesitantly.

"Okay, later then," said the doctor trying to be pleasant. Ross flinched under her exam, and she noticed. "I'm going to have to administer something for the pain now."

"But doc -" Ross tried to argue.

"Don't argue with me," said Doctor Taylor firmly. "I've heard it all before from you macho male types anyway. Just co-operate, and I won't have to do anything neither of us wants, okay?"

Ross looked at her. "You're not going to throw any ashtrays at me are you?"

"What?" the doctor looked at him in confusion.

"Never mind," said Ross, turning away. "Six weeks," he mumbled to himself, as the painkiller the doctor injected into his IV drip made its way into his system and he fell asleep.

\* \* \*

><p>The next day, Chandler was running around the apartment trying to get himself organised. All of a sudden the duck wandered into the room, and started flapping its wings. Joey, who'd been watching TV, started chasing it around the apartment.<p>

"Joe, will you stop that already? I'm trying to do things here -" started Chandler.

"I'm tryin', man!" called back Joey. "I think the duck needs to be fed, y'know, otherwise it'll get cranky!"

All of a sudden, the duck started to quack loudly. "All right already, keep your feathers on!" Joey shouted at it.

Just then the phone rang. Chandler answered it with a frustrated, "What?"

He listened for a few moments, and his attitude immediately changed. "Oh, no no no no sir, nothing's wrong!" he cried out. "What's that? The reports? Uh, yes, they should be on your desk -"

He listened again, and then said, "Well, I have another copy here at home -" he stopped. "You'll be over when? No, no, that's fine! I'll see you then, no problem!" and he hung up.

Still chasing the duck, Joey said, "What was all that about?"

Chandler grimaced. "Some people from work are coming for a bunch of reports, that got lost somehow."

Joey stopped and looked at him. "Y'know, if I was still working for your company, you could always blame me. Hey, I got an idea!"

Chandler looked at him in horror. "Whoa - ho - ho! NO WAY, JOSE!"

Joey said pleadingly, "Come on! It'll be great! I mean, what can they do, fire me?"

Chandler said sarcastically, "No, fire ME for being dumb enough to rehire you in the first place!"

Joey looked hurt. "No, they wouldn't! Please?"

Before Chandler could answer, the duck started quacking with hunger again. "I better feed it, before it starts eatin' somethin' it shouldn't!" said Joey and started looking through the cupboards.

Chandler sat down and was about to say another sarcastic remark, when he suddenly got a funny look on his face. "Joey, was I supposed to do something today?"

Joey shrugged. "I dunno, man. Was it important?"

Chandler hesitated. "Yeah, I'm pretty sure."

Joey shrugged again. "Was it about a woman?"

Chandler shook his head uncertainly. "No, I - I don't think so."

Joey said, "Then it can't be all that important. But with chicks, you've gotta pay a lot of attention, y'know? You remember Ross's doctor? That kind of woman, every word out of her mouth is -"

Chandler leaped up. "Oh my God! Ross! I completely forgot! What time is it?" He checked his watch. "Argh! He's going to kill me!" He dashed across the room and started to dial furiously on the phone.

All of a sudden, Monica burst into the room. "You guys!" she said. "You have to help us! Now!"

Joey asked, "What's the problem?"

Monica said urgently, "Well, it's black, it's huge, it has too many legs, and it's in my bathroom!"

Joey said, puffing up his chest in Superman-type style, "Okay, I'm comin'!", and strode out of the apartment with arms swinging.

Chandler didn't pay any attention. Monica went up to him and said, "Chandler, we need to talk. I have something to tell you, it concerns both of us -"

"I know Mon, I know." he said urgently.

"You do?" she said in confusion.

"Yeah, look, I'm real sorry I forgot about picking up Ross today, I swear it won't happen again!" He suddenly paid close attention to the phone. "Hello? Hello?" Monica just glared at him and walked out without saying goodbye, slamming the door. Chandler glanced back for a moment, then refocussed on the telephone.

"Mercy Hospital, how can I help you?" said the bored voice of the receptionist at the other end of the line.

"Hi, I was wondering if I could talk to somebody about a patient that was supposed to be released today?" he said hopefully.

"Please hold," and the line was filled with piped music.

"Come on, come on!" Chandler muttered impatiently. All of a sudden the music vanished, and a voice said "Hello?"

"Hi," said Chandler. "I'm calling about a patient admitted yesterday, whether he's been released yet?"

"Certainly," said the nurse who was sitting at her desk in the overcrowded office of the ward. "What name please?"

"It's - AAH!" yelled Chandler, as the duck began to peck at his legs and he started hopping about in the room. "The duck's trying to eat me!"

"I'm sorry?" said the nurse looking at the mouthpiece in utter confusion.

"Never mind!" Chandler said. "The name is Ross G - Dah! - eller!" as the duck began chasing Chandler around the apartment.

"Excuse me, did you say Ross Dellar?" said the nurse.

"Huh?" said Chandler still trying to avoid the duck, and not paying close attention. "Uh, yeah!"

"Dellar, Dellar," said the nurse tracing a list of names down a sheet of paper, and opening a folder, finally finding the name she wanted. A strange, sorrowful expression came onto her face. "Oh no," she said to herself. "Hello, are you there?" she said to the mouthpiece.

Chandler finally managed to lure the duck into his room, and then shut the door behind him leaving the starving creature trapped inside. He sighed, "Yes, I'm here."

The nurse paused. "Are you a member of the immediate family?" she asked.

Chandler said, "Uh, I'm a close friend -"

The nurse said, "And your name is?"

"Chandler Bing. Look, what's going on?" Chandler was getting worried.

"Mr. Bing, I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but -"

"What?"

"Your friend - he passed away last night."

Chandler froze. "What? You can't mean - Ross died?"

The nurse said sympathetically. "I'm very sorry. It's a horrible tragedy -"

Chandler interrupted her. "But - but he wasn't critically injured, he - I mean, what happened?"

The nurse said softly, "Three of our patients died last night from exposure to contaminated food. I really am very sorry, Mr. Bing. If you could hold on, and please give me the next-of-kin for the deceased, perhaps I could -"

Chandler hung up the phone, and just stared into space, still in shock.

\* \* \*

><p>In the meantime in the girls' apartment across the hall, Joey was

emerging triumphantly from the bathroom. "Problem solved!" he stated proudly.<p>

"Yeah, and it only took you, like, six minutes!" said Phoebe.

"What can I say?" shrugged Joey. "You have to be able to think like your opponent! You've gotta get inside his head, study his tactics, and beat him at his own game!"

"Joey, even you are supposed to have more than the intellectual capacity of a spider!" Monica snapped.

Just then Chandler walked in, still in a daze, and came to a stop near the kitchen table. "I - I talked to the hospital," he said vaguely.

"So what did they say?" asked Phoebe.

"They -" Chandler stopped, forced himself to go on. "They said - Ross is gone."

"He didn't wait for you to pick him up?" said Monica in irritation. "I swear, my brother can be the most impatient -"

"No," interrupted Chandler. "That's not what I - I mean, he's, he's G - O - N - E, gone," spelling it out, unable to say it plainly.

There was a silence, and remarkably Joey was the first to understand. "Dude, do you mean G - O - N - E as in D - E - A - D?"

"Uh, yeah," Chandler stammered in misery.

Monica stared at him. "Come on, this is crazy! What are you talking about?"

Chandler, still looking shocked, tried to explain, "Uh, it was an accident I guess - food poisoning, two other people died, I didn't get all the details from the nurse, I guess I was so freaked out I just hung up -"

Phoebe was still trying to wrap her brain around the concept. "So - Ross is dead?"

All of a sudden Monica burst into tears and threw herself into Chandler's arms. "NO! No, this is not happening!" she screamed. Phoebe and Joey came over to try and comfort her.

Just then Rachel walked out of her room. "What's going on?" she asked the group.

"Rachel, we've got some bad news -" Joey started.

"Yeah, you better sit down, this is going to be a shock -" said Chandler.

"What is it?" she said.

"Rachel, Ross died," Phoebe said.

Rachel looked at them, and snorted with laughter. "Yeah right, very

funny. Now what-"

"Rach, we're not kiddin'!" cried out Joey.

Rachel's face froze. "You're not? But what - how -?"

"There was an accident at the hospital -" Chandler started.

"The hospital?" Rachel sat down the couch, as her legs could no longer support her. "Oh my God, oh my God, this - this is all my fault!"

Monica let go of Chandler, and went over to try to comfort Rachel. "Sweetie, no, it wasn't your fault -"

"Don't you get it?" Rachel almost screamed. "He died after I told him to drop dead! If we hadn't had that fight, he wouldn't have fallen down the stairs, and he wouldn't have even been in that hospital! And I didn't even visit him! Oh my God -"

"Rach, come on!" Monica urged. "Nobody planned this! You think the hospital deliberately poisoned three people? It's just, just -" she broke down then and started to cry, and Rachel joined her.

Eventually, the crying subsided. The five friends congregated around the kitchen table in silence, thinking about the absent Ross Geller. All of a sudden the door opened and Ross walked in, his left arm in a sling. "Hey everybody," he said absently.

"Hey,", "Hi," said his five friends not really noticing. Then with a start, all of them jumped back in fear and let out a scream or yell, "YAHH!"

"What?" said Ross startled and puzzled.

"You - you -" said Chandler in amazement. "You're alive!"

Ross looked at himself. "I seem to be, yeah," he agreed in confusion

"But they told me you were dead!" Chandler cried.

"What?"

"The hospital!"

Rachel screamed "Ross!" and ran over and hugged him fiercely.

"Ow!" Ross cried out. "Watch it Rach, I'm still pretty sore in certain places!"

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" she said and started kissing him repeatedly wherever her lips could reach, his neck, his ear, his cheek and chin.

"What the - Rachel, please!" Ross eventually managed to extract himself from Rachel's embrace, only to have Monica and Phoebe immediately take her place. "Hey, what's going on here?" he asked Chandler and Joey.

Joey still looked as if he had witnessed something from out of the Bible. "Chandler said you were dead, dude!" he said. "You know, that food thing at the hospital, three people died -"

Finally Ross understood, as Monica and Phoebe disengaged. "Oh! And you thought I was -"

"Yeah!" all five of them said.

Ross couldn't help himself, he started laughing uncontrollably. "Ross!" Monica smacked him in annoyance. "Will you cut it out? It's not funny!"

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry," he choked out. "So, did you guys at least have a decent funeral planned for me?"

"ROSS!" they cried out, and the girls started throwing pillows at him, injured arm or not.

\* \* \*

><p>Later on, in the boys' apartment, Chandler and Joey were having a quick meal on the kitchen counter. "Sure is good to have things back to normal," said Joey.<p>

"Yeah," agreed Chandler. "Man, this day could not have BEEN more freakier!"

Just then Phoebe walked into the apartment. "Hey you guys," she said.

"Hey Pheebs, what's up?" asked Joey.

"My brother Frank just asked me for help on something, and I could use your advice."

"Shoot," said Chandler.

"He said someone asked him, 'What do you do if there's an awkward situation, and you need a way to distract people from what happened?'. What do you think is the best answer?"

"Is this some kind of trick question?" asked Chandler.

"No, actually, it's one of his oral exam questions for refrigerator college!" said Phoebe brightly.

Joey shrugged. "Getting someone to talk about the weather always works for me, Pheebs."

"Okay, thanks!" she said with a smile.

Suddenly Rachel and Ross walked in, and Ross said, "Has anyone seen Monica?"

Rachel added quickly, "She's been gone for ages, we've been looking for her everywhere -"

Chandler shrugged. "Sorry guys, she's not here."



At this precise instant the phone rang, and Chandler answered it.  
"Hello?"

He listened for a few moments. "Hi, Mr. Treeger, what's up?"

Just then Monica walked in. "Chandler, I have to talk to you."

"Please Monica, I'm on the phone, just a second."

"But it's important!"

"I'm sure it is -" She noticed he wasn't even paying attention, and her face grew angry. "Chandler!" she said loudly.

Just then the doorbell rang. Chandler said, "Mr. Treeger, could you please hold?" and looked at the door.

Joey answered the summons. "Hello?" he said, opening the door.

A blonde man and a red-haired woman in business clothes were standing outside. "We're here to see Chandler Bing," said the man.

"Phil! Amanda! Come in, please!" Chandler beckoned them inside.

"We're just here to pick up those reports, Chandler, Doug wants them pronto," said Amanda.

"Chandler, we have something very important to discuss! Can we go somewhere private?" Monica said tugging impatiently at his sleeve.

"Yeah, soon!" he said. To Phil and Amanda he said, "They're right in there, on the nightstand, through that door!" he pointed.

Phil went across the room and opened the door, only to jump back in terror, as he tried to avoid the duck that came charging out of Chandler's room making very loud and angry noises.

Joey, who had started preparing some drinks on a tray, shoved the tray into Chandler's hands and called out, "It's okay, I've got it!" and started chasing the duck around the room as pandemonium and chaos set in.

All of a sudden Chandler's attention was diverted back to the phone now scrunched up against his ear, as Mr. Treeger angrily asked, "What are all those animal noises I'm hearing up there?"

"Uh, it's nothing, we're just having a little party in here!" Chandler said desperately.

"Chandler!" shouted Monica.

"What?" he shouted back.

"CHANDLER, I'M PREGNANT, YOU'RE GOING TO BE A FATHER!" she screamed.

Stunned, Chandler dropped the drinks tray and the phone and stared at her open-mouthed. Everything landed on the floor with a loud crash, but nobody noticed.

There was a silence. Then Phoebe said in a panicked voice, "Hey, uh, the duck looks wet, d'you think the window was open and it's raining outside?"

**\*\*THE END\*\***

End  
file.